(c) if so, the steps proposed or being proposed in regard to grant of permission to the proposals; and

(d) the time by which all these pending proposals would be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Delays have not been caused on account of Railways. However, in many of the cases the party or the State Government do not submit proposal well in time, or deposit the estimated charges required in time, or furnish the agreement or clarify the queries made in regard thereto expeditiously. These works involve stages like joint feasibility inspection, approval of plans and drawings, deposition of estimated charges, obtaining sanction from Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) etc. prior to permission to carry out the works at site.

(c) Checking and approval thereafter of Engineering plans submitted by parties/State Govt., is done at Divisional & Zonal Headquarters level as soon as the cases are received and revised submissions made thereafter.

(d) 7 cases will be cleared during the current month and remaining cases are at different stages of joint site verification, preparation and approval of plans and estimates, CRS's sanction and payment by the party. Hence, early clearance also depends upon prompt and correct submission by the party in fulfilling the requisites.

Introduction of new trains for Southern Region

1915. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many trains going to southern capitals like Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore have been approved this year for speeding up for introduction of new trains in the southern region;

(b) whether it is a fact that the journey time between New Delhi and the said southern capitals remains the same for the past 25 to 30 years, whereas the trains connecting metros in the northern region run comparatively at a higher speed;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of the old bogies have been attached to the south bound trains; and

(d) if so, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Introduction of new trains and speeding up of trains is a continuous process over Indian Railways. During the current financial year 42 trains serving southern Capitals like Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore have been made superfast and 82 more trains have been speeded up so far. Similarly, 38 new trains have been approved for introduction in the current financial year in the southern region.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Passenger coaches of all trains are replaced based on their life and condition. Such condemned coaches are replaced by newly manufactured coaches on all Zonal Railways.

Electrification of Bangalore-Mumbai Line

1916. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of electrification of Bangalore-Mumbai Line;

(b) the total investment being contemplated in rail projects in Karnataka;

(c) what is the growth of rail passenger traffic from and into Bangalore over the last three years;

(d) what is the plan to upgrade the various railways stations in Bangalore city in view of huge growth in rail travel; and

(e) whether there is any plan to make Bangalore city railway station a model station as per the Ministry's plans for creating model stations all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) On Bangalore-Mumbai rail line, Mumbai-Pune is already electrified and electrification of Pune-Wadi-Guntakal-Gooty section has been entrusted to Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd., based on the project's bankability. However, at present, there is no proposal to electrify Gooty-Bangalore rail line.

(b) Cost of ongoing projects falling partly/fully in Karnataka is about Rs. 7562 crore and an expenditure of Rs. 2656 crore had been incurred upto March 2006.